

# Theology of Nature

## 自然的神學

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## Abstract

The essay's theme is a new version of a theology of nature which was challenged by modern science and its understanding of evolution in the continuum of the universe. In a first step, Francis Bacon's scientific philosophy (*Novum Organon*, 1620, at the beginning of modernity), gives an example for a functional cooperation between metaphysics on the one side and natural sciences on the other. In a second step, the impact of scientific developments on the understanding of human nature, especially in physics and biology in the 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> century, made necessary a new anthropology. This can be found in the example of Max Scheler (*The Human Place in the Cosmos*, 1927), in the description of human beings by their "world-openness" or "place outside the world." Finally, in a third step, the evolutionary thinking of the French philosopher Henry Bergson (*Creative Evolution*, 1907) motivates the initiative for a mutual understanding of metaphysics, theology, and scientific methods and results – as long as the latter is not fixate on a "mechanistic" all-explaining attitude. So, cosmology and theology, like never before since the era of enlightenment, come together via the bridge of theological- and scientific-open metaphysics; the latter is meant decisively different from its older sister in the era of scholastic philosophy as can be seen in the cases of A. N. Whitehead (*Process and Reality*, 1927) and R. C. Neville (*Philosophical Theology*, 2013-15); and in the most admirable way in Ch. S. Peirce's (1839-1914) both semiotically and evolutionary designed metaphysics. In its center, we find the theory of the continuum, borrowed from mathematics, in which human feeling, interacting, and thinking prove the evolving

growth and regularity of reason/signs in the universe. The threefold organized reasoning reminds of the Christian concept of trinitarian thinking and, while it has become impossible to justify any form of “finalism” in nature, the creative power we do experience is best expressed by figurative, translatory religious language, e.g. “*creatio ex nihilo*.” To think in that way, both in religious symbols and abstract structures, makes it possible to accept at the same time the religious plurality (in its traditional, concrete forms), the structural universality of metaphysical categories, and the individual authority of revelation.

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